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SIPDIS

STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,  
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USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;  
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;  
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CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;  
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ASIA TRIP

¶1. LEAD STORIES: Top stories on Monday morning included yesterday's Asia policy speech by Prime Minister Hatoyama in Singapore, in which he explained his policy of moving forward with the East Asian Community initiative while stressing that the U.S.-Japan alliance is the central pillar of Japanese diplomacy.

¶2. "U.S.-Japan Alliance Is Cornerstone for Asia Strategy" On President Obama's Asia policy speech in Tokyo on Saturday, the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri stated in an editorial (11/15): "The speech reflected President Obama's eagerness to ensure stability and prosperity in Asia under the U.S. leadership.... The President made it clear that the U.S.-Japan alliance will be a foundation for Washington's deeper engagement in Asia. President Obama and Prime Minister Hatoyama agreed during the summit to 'deepen' the bilateral alliance. The premier must exercise leadership in order to rebuild bilateral relations, which have begun to show signs of strain."

¶3. "Demonstrate Presence in 'Historic Turning Point' in Pan-Pacific" The business-oriented Nikkei editorialized (11/15): "President Obama stated in his speech that we have now reached 'one of those rare inflection points in history.' What has happened in Asia during the 20 years following the end of the Cold War is indeed a dynamic change that could be called historic.... In his address, the President underscored his desire to change the flow of trade from Asia to the U.S. by increasing exports from the U.S. to Asia. The address reflected his strong desire to use the dynamism of Asia to rebuild the U.S. economy, as well as Washington's frustration with its declining national strength."

¶4. "Speech Implies Strong Request for Japan" The liberal Mainichi argued (11/15): "Since the speech was delivered in Tokyo, the President's consideration toward Japan was noticeable. He underscored the value of the U.S.-Japan alliance and praised Japan's international contributions.... However, the most important message

in the speech was his expression of determination for the U.S. to become much closer to Asia and strengthen its leadership in the region. He also stated that the U.S., as a nation of the Pacific, will join discussions on deciding the future of the region and take part in regional organizations to be created in the future. This reference can be taken as a message that Washington will not accept an East Asian Community that does not include the U.S."

¶5. "Concrete Ideas on 'Pacific State' Should Be Presented" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun insisted (11/15): "President Obama's foreign policy speech in Tokyo was somewhat different from his two earlier speeches [in Prague and Cairo] in that he did not put forward a great vision and spoke primarily about realistic elements throughout the speech. As he stated in the speech, the U.S. has been disengaged from many regional organizations in recent years, and during this period when U.S. engagement in Asia was minimal, a variety of regional consultation frameworks have been implemented.... As the first 'Pacific President,' who was born in Hawaii and raised in Indonesia, the President promised to exercise leadership. His challenge for the time being will be whether he can offer specific ideas by the time he chairs the APEC summit in 2011."

¶6. "U.S.'s Return to Asia Welcomed" The liberal Asahi wrote in an editorial (11/15): "The President's statement that he is America's first Pacific President caught us by surprise. It was an expression referring to his childhood days in Hawaii and Indonesia. It also represented his strong determination for the U.S. to engage deeply with the growing Asia-Pacific region.... It is apparent that this region, which includes China and India, will be an engine for world growth in the 21st century. His view that the future of the U.S.

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economy depends on this region is convincing. America's political and security presence is still unparalleled, and [regional] expectations are high for Washington as a proponent of peace and democracy."

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